/1027 cont./

and speak only in a low voice. All this is proof of the respect which is shown them. A very experienced and upright old man fairly embodies the law of custom and tradition; he is, therefore, a living example and a constant admonisher for the younger tribal members.

2. General Welfare

A death or an accident on the one hand, sickness or physical disability on the other, can cause a person who is alone serious difficulty in case there is no definite person to come to his aid. The public knows that it is now duty-bound to come to his rescue, and in doing so it follows a certain course of action which has been accepted since ancient times.

Every human society counts among its members, temporarily or permanently, old persons with the infirmities of age. They are no longer capable of acquiring their subsistence singlehanded. They must be cared for, according to the strict custom of the Yamana, by their own children, as well as by their nearest relatives and the neighbors who happen to be present. When it comes to fulfilling this duty, there are no degrees of responsibility; in fact everyone is required to look after an aged person who is staying near his hut. The old person is probably never left completely alone, except perhaps temporarily because of urgent work. Usually one of the grown children constantly takes the widowed parent along on his own trips. If both parents are still living, they always stay together; they are often visited by their children who cheerfully fulfill their needs for food and clothing, firewood and tools. Hyades (d):308 assures us: "Adults have due respect for their parents and old people are never badly treated" /translated from French/. It is also said, "They are cared for and fed until their death" /translated from French/ (La Nature:311), and Despard (b):698 asserts that "children care for parents and grand-parents with kind consideration" /cited in English/. As long as a person has the strength, he helps himself; otherwise he must accept the help of his children and friends. As Bridges (a):205 reports, "grown-up children are expected to support their parents when they become aged; the son generally makes his father, if he is past work, a canoe every /1028/ season, and if the aged man is a

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889 widower he lives entirely under the charge of his eldest son"
• 737 /cited in English/ (444). Naturally some children are more tender

444. This hardly agrees, however, with what he (a):206 adds soon after: "The aged are often much neglected, yea, cruelly treated, and I have heard of cases where by their own children they have been killed, to get rid of the trouble of keeping them" /cited in English/. A person who is displeased with the treatment he receives from his own children easily finds refuge with relatives and friends.

and loving toward their aged parents than others. A person who no longer has any children of his own joins a related family or friends. This much is certain, no one is abandoned because of his infirmities. I personally repeatedly witnessed the willing care given even those persons whose lot in old age was a long, burdensome invalidism.

758 The nearest relatives and all the neighbors no less attentively care for a sick person. There are no medicines in Tierra del Fuego. They keep the sick person company and never leave him in some place all by himself. Hyades (d):307 and (p):331 repeatedly asserts: "The sick are not abandoned, and the feeble are helped" /translated from French/. Bridges (h):209 agrees: "The infirm are well cared for, especially by the women" /translated from Spanish/, and elsewhere (i):14 he says even more explicitly: "Great consideration was shown to the sick, they were well attended and as far as possible their wishes were fulfilled. The nursing chiefly fell to the lot of the women" /cited in English/. BD:427 even gives the special expression, tauxdîtu, "to often visit as a man his sick friend" /cited in English/. If their own child is seriously ill, the helpless parents are in actual despair; adults, too, are deeply affected by the physical suffering of one of their loved ones.
732 For decades old Whaits has been totally blind. It is touching to see the help and attention which his own daughters bestow on him, as do old and young in the neighborhood. Everyone is concerned about him, and one competes with another in loving service for him. It